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Concert: Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Michael Hall

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

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Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Michael Hall, conductor

Ford Hall

Tuesday, December 6th, 2016

8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Divertimento, Sz. 113

I. *Allegro non troppo*

II. *Molto adagio*

III. *Allegro assai*

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Symphony No. 4 in B \flat Major

I. *Adagio – Allegro vivace*

II. *Adagio*

III. *Allegro vivace*

IV. *Allegro ma non troppo*

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Biographies

Michael Hall, having concluded his second season as Music Director of the Kennett Symphony, is recognized for his inspired performances, imaginative programming, and passion for developing new audiences. In addition to his recent appointment as Principal Guest Conductor of Florida's Space Coast Symphony, Hall has appeared with many of today's leading ensembles, including the Houston Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, and the Vancouver Symphony. He will return to the Tucson Symphony, with whom he has a special relationship and has been a frequent guest conductor in multiple concert series over the past nine seasons.

Formerly Music Director of the Southwest Florida Symphony from 2007 to 2012, Hall's drive for artistic excellence, innovative thematic programming, and collaborations with celebrated guest artists resulted in unprecedented artistic growth, audience praise, and enthusiastic reviews. Before being appointed Music Director of the Southwest Florida Symphony, Michael Hall held the position of Associate Conductor with the Pacific Symphony in California.

A passionate advocate for music education, both in the concert hall and in the classroom, Maestro Hall has conducted many noteworthy college and youth orchestras including the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Winnipeg Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University. During the 2012/13 season, Hall was Visiting Guest Artist, Conductor in Residence at Ball State University's School of Music in Indiana, and this season, has accepted an invitation as Visiting Guest Professor at Ithaca College's School of Music.

Hall holds a Master's degree in conducting from the University of Michigan, a DipRAM from the Royal Academy of Music in London. While studying in England, Hall also held the position of Assistant conductor of the Havant Symphony Orchestra in the UK. He was also a finalist in the International Conducting Competition in Besançon, France and was awarded Third Prize in the Cadaques Orchestra International Conducting Competition in Spain.

Program Notes

Béla Bartók (Nagyszentmiklós, Austria-Hungary, March 25, 1881 - New York City, September 26, 1945)

Divertimento, Sz. 113

Divertimento, scored for a string orchestra, was the last piece Bartók composed in Hungary before fleeing from it during the Second World War. Paul Sacher, a conductor and friend of Bartók commissioned him to write what is now known as *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* in 1936. It was an extremely difficult piece to perform, especially back in the 1930s, and when Sacher asked Bartók to compose another piece three years later, he asked Bartók to keep it simpler. In just 15 days at the Sacher's family cabin where he was provided his own personal chef and a piano, Bartók composed the *Divertimento*.

The meaning of divertimento has been diverse, but a common theme emerges among the many different definitions. For example, it was generally meant to be pleasing to the ear rather than act as a dramatic interpretation of different emotions. At one point, it meant background music to be played outside during a banquet by a solo instrument. A commonly accepted definition now means a piece of music that is both fun for the audience as well as the performer, and Bartók's *Divertimento* accomplishes that in abundance.

The first movement has the feeling of a gypsy waltz. Like in a Baroque concerto grosso (of Handel, for example), there are clear separations between moments for soloist and everyone else. Bartók continues his borrowing of Baroque traditions by writing quite traditional harmonies in many moments. Bartók returns to his familiar chromatic language in the second movement which turns quite dark. In the third movement, Bartók turns to a quick dance-like feeling with less dissonance than the second movement. A complex three-voice fugue turns into a cadenza for solo violin. The *Divertimento* ultimately ends with an exciting and fast conclusion.

Ludwig van Beethoven (Bonn, December 16, 1770 - Vienna, March 26, 1827)

Symphony No. 4 in B \flat Major

In the summer of 1806, Beethoven was coming off of the premiere performances of his only opera, *Fidelio*. Its premiere was a failure as Napoleon's forces invaded Vienna and the empress and most of Beethoven's usual audiences (the nobility and upper-class citizens) had fled the city. Ironically, for an opera which bases its plot on a politicized prison-break story fueled by love, heroism, and sacrifice, its premiere was mostly attended by French military officers who had just invaded Vienna and were predictably not enthusiastic. The summer in 1806 following *Fidelio* was a prolific one for Beethoven, even to his standards. He composed his *Fourth Symphony* in about a month during that summer. Around this time, he also composed his *Fourth Piano Concerto*, the *Violin Concerto*, the *Appassionata Sonata*, and the *Razumovsky Quartets*.

With its light-hearted character, the Fourth Symphony is frequently contrasted against its gargantuan predecessor, the Eroica Symphony, and its successor, the celebrated Fifth. Although it is often overshadowed by its immediate siblings, it was immediately well received—something that actually was not guaranteed for Beethoven during his day. Mendelssohn chose to perform this symphony at his first concert with the renown Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, and Schumann was effusive in his praise for the symphony.

Despite the optimistic character of the Symphony as a whole, the first movement begins with a very introspective and mysterious introduction. It quickly gives way to a new exuberant and spirited character. The second movement exudes elegance and royalty unlike anything Beethoven had written before. It touched Berlioz so much that he claimed it was composed by Archangel Michael himself. The third movement throws both the orchestra and the listener for a loop because in typical Beethovenian fashion, the downbeats are skirted. Its playful and fast character further cemented the role of the Scherzo in third movements within the design of a typical symphony. The finale buzzes with excitement and reaffirms the joy of life.

Personnel

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Flute

Nicole Murray

Oboe

Melissa DeMarinis

Sarah Pinto

Clarinet

Brooke Miller

Vivian Becker

Bassoon

Sonja Larson

Emily Roach

Horn

Evan James Young

Tori Boell

Trumpet

Shaun Rimkunas

Matt Brockman

Percussion

Daniel Monte

Violin 1

Hannah Lin

Henry Smith

Shelby Dems

Amy Chryst

Reuben Foley

Violin 2

Daniel Angstadt

Daniel McCaffrey

Alem Ballard

Jennifer Riche

Viola

Richard Cruz

Carter Kohler

Zach Cohen

Geoffrey Devereux

Cello

David Fenwick

Bryce Tempest

Emily Doveala

Molly DeLorenzo

Terri Landez

Nick Chai

Double Bass

Keifer Fuller

Ryan Petriello

Christian Chesanek

Assistant Conductor

Keehun Nam